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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/623,006	07/18/2003	Val Krukonis	07678/116002	4588
21559	7590	11/23/2005	EXAMINER	
CLARK & ELBING LLP 101 FEDERAL STREET BOSTON, MA 02110			MAYES, DIONNE WALLS	
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	1731

DATE MAILED: 11/23/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/623,006	KRUUKONIS ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Dionne Walls Mayes	1731	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                    2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
  1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
  3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)   | Paper No(s)/Mail Date: ____ .   |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____ . | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
|  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ .                                   |

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-10, 28-29, and 31-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Niven, Jr. et al (US. Pat. No. 4,727,889).

Niven, Jr. et al discloses all that is recited in the claims. Note: Tobacco in container 20 is subjected to subcritical carbon dioxide fluid during expansion, and then said fluid is removed from the container (see col. 5, lines 27-45, and abstract).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claim 30 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Niven, Jr. (US. Pat. No. 4,727,889) in view of Ohno et al (US. Pat. No. 4,211,243).

While Niven, Jr. may not specifically state that the tobacco has a pH of between 4-9, this is not deemed to patentably distinguish the claims from the reference since it is known to operate tobacco expansion under acidic conditions, as evidenced by Ohno et al ( see Table 1)

5. Claims 11-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niven, Jr. et al (US. Pat. No. 4,727,889) in view of Baehl et al (US. Pat. No. 6,209,546).

While Niven may not state that a constituent is separated from the subcritical fluid, Baehl et al discloses a method for recovering expansion agents in order to recycle and reuse said agents in subsequent processes. If necessary, the expansion agents can be subjected to a separator to remove entrained constituents from said agent (see entire document, especially col. 9, lines 65-66). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have recovered the carbon dioxide used as an expansion agent in Niven, Jr. removed any desired constituent therefrom, and recycled it back to the process in order to conserve process materials.

Regarding claims 15 and 17, the use of citric acid or magnesium silicate would have been an obvious choice for a separating substance since such is used in many arts to filter impurities.

Regarding claims 25-27, it also follows that any desirable component removed from the separator would obviously have been recycled back to be deposited on the tobacco in order to utilize such component without wasting product.

### ***Conclusion***

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dionne Walls Mayes whose telephone number is (571) 272-1195. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 7AM - 4:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steven P. Griffin can be reached on (571) 272-1189. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Dionne Walls Mayes  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 1731

November 18, 2005